USA COMMENTS

REPORT OF THE FEBRUARY 2016 MEETING
OF
THE OIE TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS COMMISSION

CHAPTER 8.8 – Article 8.8.4 bis Infection with Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) virus

The United States thanks the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards (Code) Commission for the opportunity to comment on proposed revisions of the FMD Code chapter.

Article 8.8.4bis. Compartment free from FMD where vaccination is practised

The primary change to Article 8.8.4 is to include provisions for establishing and recognizing a compartment free from FMD *with* vaccination in an endemic or infected country/zone.

The United States urges the Code and Scientific Commissions to revisit the idea of compartment free from FMD with vaccination in an infected country or zone. As noted in Code Chapter 4.3 on Zoning and Compartmentalization, compartments are established and maintained on the basis that the biosecurity and disease control measures in place are sufficient to maintain a free population within the compartment. By nature, diseases that can be spread by airborne routes do not lend themselves well to compartmentalization, particularly if the animals within the compartment are raised in open conditions (i.e., no air control) in an otherwise infected country.

Specifically, the guideline noting that approval for both types of compartments "should only be granted when no case of FMD has occurred within a 10-kilometre radius of the compartment during the past three months" is problematic. Sufficient evidence exists to show that FMDv can be carried both short and long distances by wind and cause additional outbreaks (see Donaldson and Alexandersen 2002). FMDv has been reported to potentially spread up to about 300 km by wind (Gloster et al., 1981, Gloster et al., 1982, Donaldson et al., 1982a, Donaldson et al., 1982b, Sorensen et al., 2000 and Sorensen et al., 2001). Survival times of FMDv has been shown to be 20 weeks on hay or straw, and up to 6 months in slurry during winter.

Most cattle and small ruminant populations, as well as non-commercial swine, are raised in open air conditions. FMD has a relatively long incubation period during at least part of which an infected animal within a compartment typically does not show clinical signs, but is capable of spreading the virus. It would therefore seem that compartmentalizing for FMD, particularly in infected countries or zones, is unlikely to provide reliable assurances for the purposes of international trade. (However, we would be receptive to considering the establishment of an FMD compartment without vaccination in a country/zone that is FMD free with vaccination – provided the appropriate measures and conditions are in place, and the required surveillance is conducted to demonstrate that the zone/country is free of circulating virus.)

For these very concerns, the United States does not favour the adoption of this draft article and recommends that the Code and Scientific Commissions reconsider the idea of a compartment free from FMD with vaccination.